

Message Text

SECRET

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46

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 SSO-00 SPC-01

EUR-10 IO-03 PM-03 L-02 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00 OMB-01 PRS-01 DRC-01 (ISO) W

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O 051730Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3046

INFO AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE IMMEDIATE

USCINCSO IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T MANAGUA 4733

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HO, ES, NU

SUBJECT: EL SALVADOR-HONDURAS DISPUTE

1. GON GENERAL SOMOZA IN AN EXTENDED DISCUSSION WITH ME ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, REVIEWED THE DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN EL SALVADOR AND HONDURAS AS HE UNDERSTOOD THEM, WHICH HAVE OCCURRED SINCE SOMOZA'S DEPARTURE FOR SAN FRANCISCO AND HIS RETURN TO NICARAGUA.

2. SOMOZA SAID THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT BOTH SIDES INTENDED TO ALLOW THE DISCUSSIONS IN MEXICO TO BREAKDOWN AS OF DECEMBER 15, PROBABLY WITH HARSH WORDS BEING EXCHANGED BY BOTH SIDES. SOMOZA FELT THAT THIS WOULD BE EXTERMEY UNFORTUNATE AND THAT IF THE MOMENTUM OF THE AGREEMENTS REACHED BETWEEN MOLINA AND LOPEZ AT JALAPA WERE ALLOWED TO BE DISSIPATED, THAT IT WOULD BE A "LONG TIME" BEFORE EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE REACTIVATED. IT WAS SOMOZA'S STRONG FEELING THAT THERE WAS AT LEAST A REMOTE POSSIBILITY THAT AN ARRANGED FACE TO FACE MEETING

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BETWEEN MOLINA AND LOPEZ PRIOR TO THE DECEMBER 15 DEADLINE

MIGHT BRING ABOUT POSITIVE RESULTS AND HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THIS WAS THE ONLY POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE PERESENTLY LEFT.

3. SOMOZA TELEPHONE GENERAL LOPEZ AND ASKED HIM IF HE WOULD BE WILLING TO MEET SECRETELY WITH PRESIDENT MOLINA AT A MEETING WHICH HE (SOMOZA) WOULD ARRANGE AND TO WHICH HE ALSO WOULD INVITE GUATEMALAN PRESIDENT ARANA. LOPEZ INDICATED THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO ATTEND SUCH A MEETING BUT QUALIFIED HIS ACCEPTANCE BY SAYING THAT HE WOULD WANT TO DISCUSS HIS ATTENDANCE WITH HIS GENERAL STAFF. SOMOZA THEN CALLED MOLINA AND MOLINA ACCEPTED THE INVITATION AND SAID HE WOULD MEET AT ANY CONVENIENT DATE. SOMOZA THEN TELEPHONED PRESIDENT ARANA (FYI) PRESIDENT ARANA IS RECOVERING FROM A THROAT OPERATION AND COULD NOT SPEAK DIRECTLY ON THE TELEPHONE, SO THE CONVERSATION WAS CARRIED ON BY ARANA'S SON WITH ARANA PRESENT AND TELLING HIS SON WHAT RESPONSES TO MAKE (END FYI). AND HE (ARANA) SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GLAD TO ATTEND SUCH A MEETING BUT ASKED SOMOZA AS A PERSONAL FAVOR, IN VIEW OF HIS (ARANA'S) PHYSICAL CONDITION, IF THE MEETING COULD BE HELD AT A REMOTE AIRPORT NEAR THE GUATEMALAN-HONDURAN BORDER. SOMOZA TOLD ARANA THAT HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO OBJECTION TO THIS AND THAT THE LOCATION OF THE MEETING WAS COMPLETELY UNIMPORTANT.

4. SOMOZA STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE TO EACH OF THE CHIEFS OF STATE TO WHOM HE TALKED, THAT THE MEETING MUST BE HELD BEFORE DECEMBER 12 SINCE HE (SOMOZA) IS GOING ON A VISIT TO MEXICO (DURING WHICH TIME HE WOULD DECORATE MEXICO'S PRESIDENT ECHEVARRIA) ON DECEMBER 13.

SOMOZA TELEPHONED ME THE LATE EVENING OF DECEMBER 4 AND SAID THAT HE WAS AWAITING A FIRM RESPONSE FROM GENERAL LOPEZ AND WAS HOPEFUL THAT LOPEZ WOULD NOT USE THE EXCUSE OF OBJECTION OF HIS GENERAL STAFF TO AVOID A MEETING. SOMOZA INTENDS TO TELEPHONE LOPEZ AGAIN IF NECESSARY TO ATTEMPT TO FIRM UP THE PROPOSED MEETING.

5. SOMOZA'S GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION IS THAT HONDURAN FOREIGN MINISTER BATRES WAS EXTREMELY INDISCREET IN PRESSING THE POSSIBILITY OF ARBITRATION SINCE MOLINA HAS CONSISTENTLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT ARBITRATION IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO EL SALVADOR AND BOTH LOPEZ AND MOLINA AGREED THAT ARBITRATION WOULD NOT BE RESORTED TO BUT THAT THE BORDER DELINEATIONS WOULD BE WORKED OUT BY MIXED MILITARY COMMISSIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

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SOMOZA, ON THE OTHER HAND, FEELS THAT MOLINA ACTED ENTIRELY TOO HASTILY IN DENOUNCING THE BOGOTA PACT. SOMOZA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCCESS AT A NEW MEETING BETWEEN MOLINA AND LOPEZ IS MILDLY OPTIMISTIC. SOMOZA HAS EXPRESSED TO ME THE FEELING THAT SUCH A PERSONAL MEETING IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE PRESENT SITUATION.

6. I WILL KEEP THE DEPARTMENT INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN

SOMOZA'S EFFORT TO BRING THIS MEETING ABOUT.
SHELTON

SECRET

NNN

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